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FM AMCONSUL CALCUTTA  
TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 0866  
INFO RUEHNE/AMEMBASSY NEW DELHI PRIORITY 0805  
RUEHBI/AMCONSUL MUMBAI 0317  
RUEHCG/AMCONSUL CHENNAI 0317  
RUEHKA/AMEMBASSY DHAKA 0185  
RUEHGO/AMEMBASSY RANGOON 0111  
RUEHKT/AMEMBASSY KATHMANDU 0189  
RUEHCN/AMCONSUL CHENGDU 0012  
RUEHIL/AMEMBASSY ISLAMABAD 0133  
RUEHLH/AMCONSUL LAHORE 0073  
RUEHKP/AMCONSUL KARACHI 0075  
RHMFIUU/CDR USPACOM HONOLULU HI  
RUEAIIA/CIA WASHDC  
RUEILB/NCTC WASHINGTON DC  
RUEHCI/AMCONSUL CALCUTTA 1058

UNCLAS CALCUTTA 000145

SIPDIS

SENSITIVE  
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E.O. 12958: N/A

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SUBJECT: EXIT POLLS SHOW NO CLEAR WINNER IN ASSAM'S LAST ROUND OF VOTING

REF: A) CALCUTTA 00134 B) CALCUTTA 00071

¶1. (SBU) Summary: On April 10, the Congress-ruled Northeast Indian state of Assam concluded its second and final phase of state assembly elections. Counting of votes and announcing of results will be on May 11. Exit polls indicate that the Congress Party will not retain a majority of over 64 seats but will be the single largest party in the assembly. Although the first election phase on April 3 was peaceful, the second phase was marred by minor violent incidents. Given its dominant position, Congress is expected to cobble together a governing coalition through alliances with small, independent parties. End Summary.

¶2. (U) On April 10, the Northeast Indian state of Assam held its second and final phase of elections for 61 of the 126-seat State Assembly. An estimated 70 percent of eligible voters participated in this phase. The first phase of polls for 65 seats had taken place on April 3 (REF. A). Voting in the second phase was mostly in constituencies with larger tribal and Muslim populations - including Karbi Anglong, North Cachar Hills, Dhubri, Nalbari, Kokrajhar, Bongaigaon, Tezpur, Nagaon, Goalpara, Barpeta, Darrang and Sonitpur. Key political figures such as Asom Gana Parishad (AGP) President and AGP Chief Minister candidate Brindaban Goswami, former Chief Minister Prafulla Mahanta of AGP (Progressive) and leader of the Muslim Assam United Democratic Front (AUDF) Badruddin Ajmal all ran in this round.

¶3. (U) The television news channel/newspaper CNN-IBN-Hindu's exit poll indicated that the ruling Congress is likely to lose its majority in the assembly, but would still emerge the single largest party. According to exit poll projections, Congress will win 56-60 seats, while the main opposition party AGP will likely get 25-31. The Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) could finish with 10-15 seats. Polling projections for the AUDF are not available. Congress' share of votes appears to have dropped eight percent from results in the state elections five years ago, but the splintered opposition is not expected to stop its return to power.

¶4. (SBU) The principal militant group United Liberation Front of Asom (ULFA) refrained from violence in these polls - a surprising change for ULFA. ULFA claimed it restrained its

cadres from "armed activities" during elections in the interest of its peace process with the GOI. However, there were reports of some violence on polling day. In the mountainous tribal area of Karbi Anglong, Karbi Longri North Cachar Liberation Front (KLNLF) militants kidnapped a Central Reserve Police Force (CRPF) constable. In the same district, unidentified attackers ambushed and injured another CRPF officer, while he was escorting electronic voting machines to the local election office. In another incident in Karbi Anglong, an Improvised Explosive Device (IED) exploded, injuring two Border Security Force (BSF) personnel while they were in their car on patrol. Again in Karbi Anglong, police shot a Karbi tribal who was attacking a local district council leader. In the Bodo tribal district of Kokrajhar, unidentified persons killed a schoolteacher, possibly the result of a local tribal political rivalry. Again in Kokrajhar, two Bodo political groups clashed but no injuries were reported. On April 9, in the city of Tezpur, Congress supporters allegedly attacked the motorcade of principal opposition party AGP President Brindabon Goswami. The mob damaged Goswami's escort vehicle but no one was hurt.

15. (SBU) Comment: While no party is expected to gain a clear majority, Congress appears most likely to form a governing coalition by aligning with small, independent parties, such as the Bodo People's Progressive Front(Hagrama and others.

JARDINE